

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to oppose H.R. 872, the *Reducing Regulatory Burdens Act*.

Today, Congress could have had a legitimate and necessary debate about the *Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act* (FIFRA). Does FIFRA do an adequate job of regulating pesticides or should the Clean Water Act supplement these efforts to address water quality issues? But that is not the debate we are having today

Instead, the Republican majority is forcing a vote to ban the EPA from ever applying the *Clean Water Act* to pesticides discharges into our nation's waters. H.R. 872 removes a critical tool the EPA may need to protect public health and it weakens America's most important clean water legislation.

This is a deceptive piece of legislation. Proponents claim H.R. 872 merely eliminates a duplicative bureaucratic process for pesticide application. In fact, if passed, H.R. 872 could permanently stop our ability to control and manage pesticide pollution found in America's rivers, lakes and streams.

H.R. 872 would reverse a 2009 court decision. That decision found that the use of some pesticides and herbicides at times is a form of water pollution requiring a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. Across the country, over a thousand waterways are known to be "impaired" or polluted because of pesticides. Many more waters may be polluted, but have not even been tested. In my home state of Minnesota—land of 10,000 lakes—a past U.S. Geological Survey study concluded that pesticides in rivers and streams in central Minnesota were "ubiquitous." Endocrine disruptors possibly linked to the use of pesticides have led to the rise of mutating fish in the Mississippi River and 11 Minnesota lakes.

Pesticide pollution in American waters is a problem that requires close review. I believe EPA is doing its job, as determined by the courts, to investigate and attempt to reduce harmful pesticide discharges into water bodies. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has told my office that they are working diligently to implement the federal court decision and the EPA's permitting efforts. I am concerned that H.R. 872 would stop state pollution control agencies across the country from their important work of regulating pesticide chemicals in our water.

Moreover, H.R. 872 is being rushed to passage with little debate. It is being considered under suspension of the rules, a procedure usually reserved for non-controversial bills. Opposing witnesses were not allowed to testify during committee hearings and the Republican majority broke its promises to work with members who had offered and then withdrawn amendments in committee. This is no way to consider a bill that has serious consequences for human health, wildlife and the environment.

Instead of tying EPA's hands, Congress should be encouraging, even pressing, the EPA to address water pollution that is threatening the health of our families and ecosystems. I oppose H.R. 872 and the overreaching effort to rush this bill through the legislative process.